degree.

289 Paper. The manufacture of paper using the bark of a tree called "Kok-Sa" (1) is limited to a single region of northern Laos.

(1) See Chapter VII.

It is not of any great importance, since it does not even suffice for local consumption.

The manufacturing processes are those familiar to everyone as being used in China, in Japan, in Annamite lands and in Burma.

321 531 Wood and ivory carving. Here we no longer have to deal with an industry, but with an art. The men who practice it are few in number, are highly paid, work slowly and are generally inveterate opium smokers.

Like the goldsmiths and jewelers, the wood and ivory carvers of Laos reproduce, ad infinitum, immutable models which their predecessors have handed down. They are, however, able to execute motifs from any given design. To be sure, they are inferior to their Burmese, Annamite, Malay, Chinese and especially Japanese colleagues as regards the movement, harmony, purity of form and finish of their work.

532 Fresco painting. The pagodas of Laos, which have been left untended for many long years, contain curious fresco paintings set off with gold, but lack of care and exposure to the weather have partly destroyed them. This art has very few practitioners in Laos, and it should be added that most of the existing frescoes are mainly the work of Burmese, Cambodians and Chinese of whom the native artists are only the pupils.

396 [438] Pirogue carpenters. Nearly all the inhabitants who [464] live on the banks of the big river or its principal tributaries are able to carve out a pirogue. Certain villages, however, have a monopoly in this industry.

When it is a matter merely of hewing out a pirogue which is to be used only for crossing the river, fishing or agricultural service, everyone does a fairly good job. But for the large pirogues which are reserved for regattas, voyages and commercial transports, recourse must be had to specialists. Only they know how to give their products